# It's a cover up: Olympic beach volleyball players to be allowed to wear more clothes

# [SIMON RICE](http://www.independent.co.uk/biography/simon-rice) TUESDAY 27 MARCH 2012

Beach volleyball, a sport with minimal following in Britain, was one of the most sought after events when tickets went on sale for this summer's Olympics.

Since its induction as an Olympic medal event in 1996, the bikinis worn by female competitors have helped define and raise the profile of the sport.

Cynics might suggest that the demand for tickets has been driven as much by the appeal of watching bikini clad competitors as it has been a desire to see world class volleyball in London.

But those heading to Horse Guards Parade this summer hoping to see semi-naked players competing in the sand near Buckingham Palace may find themselves disappointed after the sport's governing body ruled that female players will have the option to wear less revealing outfits.

The International Volleyball Federation (FIVB) has said it will allow shorts and sleeved tops at the 2012 Games, along with the traditional bikinis and body suits already permitted.

"Many of these countries have religious and cultural requirements so the uniform needed to be more flexible." FIVB spokesman Richard Baker told The Associated Press.

The less revealing outfits were already permitted for the the five Continental Cups, through which 142 nations are competing to qualify for the London Games.

"Winners of the Continental Cups will qualify for the Olympics, so it has to be applied," said Baker.

The modified rule permits "shorts of a maximum length of three centimeters (1.18 inches) above the knee, and sleeved or sleeveless tops."

The FIVB insists competitors have always had a choice what to wear. "They weren't forced to wear a bikini," Baker said.